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ABSTRACT

French Caribbean Creole, specifically Haitian Creole, is the native language of a number of students in American Schools. In order to help these students master English, the teacher should understand Creole structure and grammar. Haitian Creole is described as to: (1) Phonology--consonants; sounds present in English but lacking in Haitian Creole; sounds present in both languages but with different distribution; vowels; syllable structure; and morphophonemic and morphological invariance; and (2) Grammar--articles and plurality; pronouns; relative clauses; noun classes; verbs; the copula; questions; negatives; and lexicon. (DB)

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Section 6: Contrastive Dialectology

A CONTRASTIVE HAITIAN CREOLE-ENGLISH CHECKLIST

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1. Introduction

Teachers of English to speakers of other languages in the greater New York area are encountering in their classes increasing numbers of students at every age level from the French-speaking Caribbean. While the majority of these students come from Haiti, there is also some in-migration from the French islands of Guadeloupe and Martinique and from French Guiana and from the British islands of St. Lucia, and Dominica where a significant part of the population is French-speaking.

Since these students come from places where the official language is French, the teacher faced with such a student is almost sure to assume that the student is in fact a speaker of some variety of Standard French which is not too different from the French the teacher studied in school, and, as a result, he will expect normal sorts of French-speaker mistakes in English. In this assumption he will be aided and abetted by his student (or the student's parents) who will insist that the native language *is* French. The teacher is usually then astounded by the fact that many of the things in English which are very difficult for the French-speaker (e.g., the contrast between the simple present and the present continuous) come quite easily and naturally to his student while other things which are normally easy for the French speaker (e.g., the application of *he* only to masculine beings and *she* only to feminine ones) come only with great difficulty.

The plain truth of the matter is, of course, that such students are NOT native speakers of Standard French or anything close to it, whatever they or their parents may say. Their first language is, almost without exception, Caribbean French Creole, a language which shares with French only its vocabulary and, to some extent, its sound system but which is so different from it grammatically that these two kinds of speech must be considered to be two separate languages since the speaker of one cannot, without study, understand the other in any effective sense. To understand, then, why people from this region refer to themselves only as speakers of French (even though their command of that language may be barely minimal) one must know something about the socio-linguistic situation in the area. Both in Haiti and in Martinique, Guadeloupe and French Guiana the official language and the language of instruction in all schools is French. All public business is conducted in French and it is considered appropriate to speak only French on any kind of a public or official occasion. Almost all writing is also in French and there is in Haiti very little

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literary tradition in Creole and in the other regions almost none at all. All of these facts combine to lend to French very high social prestige and to mark Creole as the language of peasants and illiterates (see Stewart, 1962a and 1962b, for further discussion of the social roles of Creole vs. French). Since a knowledge of French is a sine qua non for upward mobility, and since those who migrate to the United States are by and large members of the class with social aspirations, it is not surprising that, by a transference of Caribbean standards, these people claim French as their native language. For them to admit to outsiders that Creole is their native language would, in their eyes, stigmatize them as lower class and backward. However, it must be emphasized that, according to every reliable linguistic survey of the area, ALL social classes (except recent European immigrants) DO speak French Caribbean Creole and NOT Standard French as their first language. Indeed most of the middle-class residents of the area do speak very good Standard French but studies have shown that even this French is usually influenced in many more or less subtle ways by Creole and in no case can it be said to be the first or native language. Thus it must be emphasized that when dealing with students or their parents from this area their protestations that, "Yes, lots of other people do speak Creole but in *our* family we speak only French," are to be taken with a large grain of salt. It may be safely assumed that the language which will exercise the primary influence on the learning of English is not French but French Creole. The teacher must be acquainted with the facts of Creole structure if he is to help his students master English and it is our purpose here to sketch in broad outline the major facts of Creole grammar.

Although there are many minor differences between the Creole dialects as spoken in Haiti, Martinique, Guadeloupe, etc., they are all mutually intelligible and have the same basic grammar. The immediate basis for our description is Haitian Creole, both because there are many more speakers of it (perhaps 4,500,000) than of all of the other French Creoles put together and because Haitians are also far and away the most numerous group of French Creole speakers in the New York area.[1]

2. PHONOLOGY

2.0 Consonants

The consonants of Haitian Creole are summarized in the following table:

p	t	(tˢ)			(kʸ)	ɬ
b	d	(dᶻ)			(gʸ)	ɮ
f	s		š			(h)
v	z		ž			
m	n			ñ		(ŋ)
	l					r
w				y		

[1] Our description is based primarily on the speech of two informants: Mrs. Horna Jean-Charles, a native of Port de Paix, and Miss Gemma Durand, a native of Port-au-Prince. We would like to thank both of them for their wonderfully cooperative understanding. Our thanks also go to the numerous Haitians who were our students at the American Language Institute of New York University and to our former colleagues there with whom we have discussed many of these problems. Our special thanks also go out to William A. Stewart, Education Study Center, Washington, D. C., who first roused our interest in the comparative study of the Afro-Caribbean Creole languages and with whom we have had many valuable discussions of Haitian Creole grammar. For more complete descriptions of Haitian Creole grammar see R. A. Hall, Jr. (1953) and Valdman (1970).

They may be contrasted with the following summary of English consonants:

p	t	č	k
b	d	ǰ	g
f	θ s	š	h
v	ð z	ž	
m	n		ŋ
	l	r	
w		y	

The following are the major points of difference between the two systems:

2. 1 Sounds present in English but lacking in Haitian Creole are /č/, /ǰ/, /θ/, /ð/ as in *church, judge, thin, then*. The usual substitutions are /š/, /ž/, /s/, /z/. A useful technique for teaching /č/ and /ǰ/ is to have the student pronounce /t/ plus /š/ and /d/ plus /ž/ in close juxtaposition, e.g. *what she is* said over and over at increasing tempo until the three words run together producing /wačíyz/. Then the element /č/ is isolated in word-initial position by diminishing the volume of the /wa/ until it disappears and the student is left saying *cheese* and then *what cheese* with a clear break between the two words. This can be reinforced by contrastive phonetic-semantic drills, for example, *watch the baby* with the teacher pointing to his eye vs. *wash the baby* with the teacher miming the act of washing. Other pairs of words for practice on the contrast of /č/:/š/ are *cheap* and *sheep, chip* and *ship*.

Once /č/ has been mastered, /ǰ/ should fall in line fairly rapidly.

The important thing to note about /θ/ and /ð/ in contrast to /s/ and /z/ is that /θ/ and /ð/ are not only frequently interdental; they are also *non-strident*—that is, English /θ/ and /ð/ in contrast with English, or Haitian, /s/ and /z/ are said with comparatively little air pressure. In teaching the student to produce /θ/ and /ð/ one should not only have him get his tongue forward into interdental position, one should also caution him to "say the sound very softly." It is useful to have him hold his hand about four inches in front of the teacher's mouth to feel the difference in air stream between /θ/ and /s/. This teaching technique is useful for speakers of any language who have difficulty with the English sounds /θ/ and /ð/.

2. 2 Sounds present in both languages but with different distribution.

2.2.1 Aspiration of Voiceless Stops

English /p/, /t/, /č/ and /k/ are all aspirated in initial position. This means that when any of these stop consonants is the first sound in a word it is followed by a light puff of air. When an /s/ precedes these consonants this puff of air is absent, as it usually is when the sound occurs in the middle of a word. This can easily be seen by holding one's hand in front of his mouth while comparing the pronunciation of *pin* (aspiration, phonetically [pʰɪn]) with *spin* (no aspiration) and *slipper* (usually, no aspiration).

Haitian /p/, /t/, and /k/ on the other hand are never aspirated. This poses a one way problem—that is, the Haitian has no difficulty in hearing English [pʰ] [tʰ], [kʰ] as the equivalent of Haitian /p/, /t/, /k/ and separating them from all the other sounds of the English system, but his unaspirated /p/, /t/, /k/ will frequently sound to the English speaker like /b/, /d/, /g/, and lead the unwary English teacher into thinking that his student is confusing the voiceless stops of English with the voiced

ones. When teaching the differential control of aspiration it is much easier to establish the difference with /p/ than with /t/, /č/ or /k/; once the student has learned to control this feature in the labial area he can then transfer it to sounds articulated farther back in the mouth.[2] While aspiration is not especially easy to teach, among methods that are reasonably successful are:

a) telling the student to puff his lips out so that the inner edges of the lips meet when a /p/ is articulated in initial position and

b) exaggerating the amount of aspiration by pronouncing the word emphatically and breathily.

2.2.2. Affrication of /t/, /d/, /k/ and /g/.

In the chart of Creole consonants, after /t/ and /d/ and before /k/ and /g/ the sounds [tˢ], [kʸ], [dᶻ], [gʸ] are given in parentheses. This is to indicate that these sounds are significant positional variants, or allophones, of /t/, /k/, /d/, /g/. When /t/ etc. are followed by /i/, /y/ or /w/, they affricate, that is, they are followed by a very lightly articulated fricative made in the same place in the mouth. The degree of affrication varies greatly from speaker to speaker and from region to region. For some speakers this is only a light /y/-like effect (palatalization) following the consonant and it does not interfere with their intelligibility in English but only makes them sound somewhat foreign. For other speakers the degree of affrication is great enough to interfere with intelligibility and work must be done with them to get them to use their non-affricated allophones before /i/, /y/ and /w/.

2.2.3 The interchange of /l/ and /n/.

Although /l/ and /n/ are separate distinctive sounds in Haitian Creole, there exist a small number of words in which they are in either systematic variation, conditioned by their phonetic environment, as in the definite article *la* which varies with *na*, or in apparently free variation, as in /kunyea/ "now" which varies with /kulyea/. This habit of interchanging /l/'s and /n/'s seems to be carried over into English by at least some Haitians so that one hears, for example, from Haitians in New York the principal island on which the city is located referred to as /malhatan/.

2.2.4 The pronunciation of /l/

General American English has two varieties of /l/ which are traditionally termed a bright *l* and a dark (or dull) *l*. For example, most Americans have a bright /l/ in words such as *light* and *leap, peel* and *pile;* they have a dark /l/ in *loop* and *love, Bill* and *pencil.* Haitian Creole has only a bright /l/; the dark /l/ of English is perceived as a /w/ by the speaker of Haitian Creole and when he attempts to imitate a teacher's pronunciation of a word such as *pencil* he may produce [pɛnsuw]. The Haitian bright /l/ is quite acceptable to speakers of English in all of the positions where a dark /l/ is used (indeed, many Southerners and speakers of British English regularly use only a bright /l/). The problem is to bring the Haitian to realize that English dark /l/ is a kind of /l/ and to respond to it with his /l/. Writing the word on the board frequently helps clarify the problem.

2.2.5 Conflicts caused by /r/ and /h/

Haitian Creole, in all dialects, has an initial /r/ which is produced by very light velar friction and which seems to American ears to have a /w/-like quality, especially before back vowels. In Haitian /r/ occurs

[2] The principle of teaching manner of articulation contrasts first in the labial area also applies to teaching voiced/voiceless distinctions to speakers of languages such as Chinese. Given speakers who have only /f/, /s/ and /š/ and not their voiced counterparts, it is much easier to first teach /v/ in opposition to /f/ and then transfer the newly acquired voicing contrast to /z/ and /ž/.

between vowels and between a consonant and a following vowel with the one restriction that the combination /š/ + /r/ is not found. However, no /r/ may occur between a vowel and a following consonant or at the end of a word. This distribution of /r/ almost exactly parallels the /r/ distribution in American English *r*-less dialects and therefore, except for the need to teach the student an English /r/, there is no need to change the student's usage; even if the teacher's own speech has /r/ in these positions, he must steel himself to accept this relatively *r*-less usage—after all, a fair proportion of the U.S. is relatively *r*-less.

The problem of teaching English /r/ to Haitians is further complicated by the fact that the Haitian tends to perceive English initial /r/ as a /w/ so that he hears *ring* as /wɪŋ/ but *crew* as /kruw/ and *dreary* as /driyriy/. When working with speakers of Haitian Creole who are adults or older children who already know how to read, as new words which begin with /r/ are introduced in oral/aural drills, they should be written on the blackboard and a moment taken to repractice the /r/-onset, with the friction of the /r/ slightly exaggerated by the teacher. (Good general directions for teaching English /r/ can be found in Lado and Fries (1954).)

For the majority of Haitian Creole dialects, initial /r/ has two historical sources: French initial /r/, as in /ri/ "street" (French *rue*), and the so-called "h-aspiré" of French, as in /romà/ 'lobster' (French *homard*). However, in some dialects in the south of Haiti, French "h-aspiré" is realized not as an /r/ but as an /h/, thus /homà/. This southern /h/ is the ONLY /h/ found in Haitian; it is completely acceptable to English speakers as a variety of /h/ and the speakers who have it represent no teaching problem in this regard. For the majority of Haitian Creole speakers, who have no /h/, this sound must be actively taught. While this is not easy to do, a strategy which has frequently worked for us is as follows: The contrast is first taught in intervocalic position with words such as *ahead* where a weakly stressed syllable is followed by an /h/ which commences a strongly stressed syllable. The student should be first made aware of the existence of a segment and the teacher should make the /h/ in his pronunciation model exaggeratedly breathy. This technique is usually successful and it simply remains to transfer the student's ability to, first, constructions with indefinite article plus noun with initial /h/, e.g.

I want a hat.
I want a house.
etc.

and then to these same words with the definite article

The hat is good
The house is big
etc.

and finally to other words

The hat is here.

and

Harry has a hat.

The pronunciation of /h/ before stressed syllables should be under good control before the student is led to attempt it before syllables with weak stress such as in *rehabilitation.*

If the student is unable to produce an intervocalic /h/ at first try, he can be brought to it by having him imitate panting.

2.3 Vowels

Haitian Creole has seven vowels:

i	u
e	o
ɛ	ɔ
a	

and two diphthongs /ey/ and /ay/.

Their values are approximately the continental ones; their closest English equivalents are: /i/ to /iy/ as in *machine;* /e/ to /ey/ as in *bait;* /ɛ/ to /ɛ/ as in *bet;* /a/ to /a/ as in *father;* /ɔ/ to /ɔH/ as in *bought;* /o/ to /ow/ as in *boat;* /u/ to /uw/ as in *pool.* All of the Haitian vowels are pure vowels and all of them are relatively short; they have none of the diphthongal off-glide or "wa-wa" quality which is so characteristic of English long vowels. (This fact of English is symbolized above by writing the English vowels with a following /y/, /w/ or /H/.[3]) The Haitian diphthongs /ey/ and /ay/ are quite close to the ones found in the English words *bay* (/ey/) and *buy* (/ay/); these English sounds represent no problem for the speaker of Haitian Creole.

These seven Haitian vowels may be compared with the system of General American English which recognizes from eleven to thirteen contrasts in its vocalic system. In English we must distinguish between a system of short vowels and a system of long vowels.

SHORT			LONG	
ɪ	(ɨ)	ʊ	iy	uw
ɛ		ə	ey	ow
æ		a	(æH)	ɔH

All dialects of General American English show the following contrasts:

a) short vowels: *pit* (/ɪ/); *pet* (/ɛ/); *pat* (/æ/); *pot* (/a/); *putt* (/ə/); *put* (/ʊ/); in addition, some dialects, but not others, have a contrast between /ɨ/ and both /ə/ and /ɪ/ as can be seen in the contrast *just* (adj.) /ə/: *just* (adv.) /ɨ/: *gist* /ɪ/.

b) long vowels: *peel* (/iy/); *pale* (/ey/); *pool* (/uw/); *pole* (/ow/); *Paul* (/ɔH/). In addition, some dialects, the dialect of New York City for example, have a contrast between long /æH/ and short /æ/ as in *have* /æ/: halve /æH/, or in the modal verb *can* when it is stressed /æ/: *(a tin) can* /æH/.[4]

There are two types of difficulty which the speaker of Haitian Creole is going to encounter with the English vowel system. One is concerned with differences in vowel quantity and the other is concerned with differences in vowel quality.

2.3.1 Teaching English vowel quantity.

Haitian Creole already has one essentially quantitative vowel distinction which provides a starting point for the teaching of English quantity. This is the distinction between /ey/ as in /soley/ "sun" and /ɛ/ as in

[3] We are here following the Trager-Smith convention of symbolizing the centering off-glide, or non-syllabic schwa, found in words such as **bought** and **air** as /H/. For an exposition of this transcription convention, see Gleason (1961).

[4] It should be emphasized that what we are dealing with here is the set of systematic contrasts found in the surface phonological system of English as they may be most usefully presented to a foreign learner of the language. The vowel system of English as a system is treated exhaustively in Chomsky and Halle (1968) which the reader should see for the deeper implications of the analysis presented here.

/bɛt/ "animal." The English distinction between *bait* and *bet* should be practiced first. Then the diphthongal extension of /iy/, /uw/ and /ow/ should be taught with words such as *beat, boot* and *boat* with the vowel length and the /y/ or /w/ quality of the glide greatly exaggerated. With /uw/ and /ow/ the teacher should also exaggerate the lip rounding of the off-glide /w/ and try to get his students to, in the beginning, produce exaggerated rounding here. In our teaching of these contrasts we have found the conventional minimal pair drills to be of only limited help and much better postponed until *after* the student has some articulatory control over the extension of the vowels by producing the off-glide diphthongs.

Work on the extension of /ɔH/ is better postponed until the student has mastered /iy/, /uw/ and /ow/; Haitian /ɔ/ is close enough in placement in the mouth to English /ɔH/ that this sound is not particularly difficult for Creole speakers and since there is no surface contrast in English between a long and short /ɔ/ there is no possibility of misunderstanding.

The contrast between /æ/ and /æH/ is not a very productive one in English and again work on it should be postponed until the rest of the vowel system has been mastered.

2.3.2 Teaching English vowel quality

The English vowels /ɛ/, /a/ and /ɔ/ are quite close to their Haitian counterparts and need not be specially stressed. However, English /ɪ/ and /ʊ/ are both lower and laxer than their Haitian equivalents—Haitian /i/ and /u/ are more nearly like the vocalic parts of the English long vowels /iy/ and /uw/ (much the same problem that one finds with Spanish speakers). In teaching these sounds, one must teach the student to find a slightly lower placement of the tongue and to lax his mouth muscles as the sound is articulated. In doing this mouth diagrams with the Haitian and the English position of the tongue marked are a useful initial teaching aid but the real work must be done in frequently repeated imitation drills where the student mimics along with the teacher. These should start with the teacher articulating the higher, Haitian-like vowel sound and then opening his mouth slightly to get the position of the lower, laxer English short vowel, thus /iiiiɪɪɪɪ/, /uuuuʊʊʊʊ/. The student should be repeating this sound sequence in chorus with the teacher, trying to get on the same harmonic beat with him. At the moment when the teacher makes the transition from the close to the more open vowel he can indicate this fact visually to his students by a hand signal, starting by holding his thumb and forefinger in the air parallel to the ground with the thumb rather close to the forefinger and then dropping the thumb slightly to indicate the onset of the laxer, more open articulation.

Variations of the same technique can be used to teach the other two short vowels which give the Haitian difficulty: /æ/ and /ə/. With /æ/ the point of departure is /ɛ/ and the student again must be taught to achieve a more open articulation With /ə/ the point of departure is /a/ and the student must be taught to close his mouth slightly for the English sound.

After the vowel segments have been mastered in isolation they can be transferred to words and to sentences which demonstrate the contrast desired, e.g. *Pet the dog* vs. *Pat the dog.*

2.3.3 /aw/ and /ɔy/

Although Haitian does not contain either of these diphthongs, they seem to pose no problem for the learner of English.

2.4 Syllable structure

In Haitian there are, essentially, only five permitted syllable shapes:

V; VC; CV; CVC; CCVC (with the second consonant of the cluster usually being either /l/ or /r/. English, on the other hand, has many more permitted syllable shapes. The difficulties which the Haitian will have with the beginnings of words, such as inserting an /ɛ/ before the /s/ of words such as *station* or *street* are relatively unimportant. However, his inability to have final consonant clusters means that such important grammatical contrasts as those between *walk, walks* and *walked* are both things which he does not readily perceive (see 2.5) and which he will not be able to reproduce unless they are actively and intensively taught to him.

2.5 Morphophonemic and morphological invariance

One major way in which Haitian Creole and English differ is that words in Haitian do not vary in phonetic shape within the same grammatical class. Haitian possesses no "long-short" vowel alternations as in English *crime-criminal, south-southern;* no vowel reduction with shifting stress as in English *photograph-photographer;* and no internal vowel change as a grammatical marker as in *keep-kept* or *ring-rang-rung*. Tense and plurality are indicated in Haitian by free morphemes which are connected very loosely, if at all, with the words with which they are associated. Thus a form such as *walked* or *ships* is doubly difficult for the speaker of Haitian Creole since it involves a non-permitted final syllable cluster which ends in a, to him, almost soundless consonant, and a grammatical function which is quite foreign to his native feeling of how a language is put together.

3.0 GRAMMAR

In the space available it is obviously impossible for us to give even a reasonable outline of the grammar of Haitian Creole. What we shall do is sketch in some of the major ways in which Haitian Creole differs from English.

3.1 Articles and Plurality

Haitian Creole has, from a surface view, an indefinite article and two definite articles—a singular and a plural. However, this apparent similarity with English breaks down rapidly. The Haitian indefinite article only corresponds to one function of the English indefinite—that is, when the meaning is "one." Thus, Haitian says

/mwɛn gɛnyɛn un liv/ I have a book

but in the negative

/mwɛn pa gɛnyɛn liv/ "I don't have (a) book."

since

I have a book

means the same as

I have one book

but

I don't have a book

means the same as

I don't have any book.

Thus the English indefinite article corresponding to *any* must be actively taught to the speaker of Haitian Creole.

In the case of the singular definite article, the distribution poses no major problem but the Haitian syntax will pose a real problem—the Haitian article occurs *after* its noun and, if the noun has an associated relative clause, then the article comes after the relative clause, thus

/lɛt la/ "the milk"
milk the

/lɛt kɛ u t'ašté dan markɛt la/
milk which you past buy in market the

"the milk which you bought at the store."

Plurality is far more difficult. Haitian Creole nouns are not inflected for plurality. The only marker of plurality in Haitian is the plural definite article. Thus one can say

/zoranž yo parɛt šɛr/ "The oranges seem expensive"

but

/zoranž parɛt šɛr/ "Oranges seem expensive."

Marking nouns for plurality is very difficult for Haitians and must be drilled intensively.

3.2 Pronouns

Haitian Creole has the following pronouns:

	Singular	Plural
1.	/mwɛn/	/nu/
2.	/u/	/nu/
3.	/li/	/yo/

These are absolutely uninflected for use in a sentence:

/mwɛn wé yo/	"I see them"
/yo wé mwɛn/	"They see me"
/frè mwɛn/	"my brother"

In addition, there is no gender distinction in the third person singular pronoun—/li/ means *he, she* and *it.* (This should not be interpreted to mean that Haitians cannot detect sex differences—it simply means that they do not make any overt distinction in their pronominal usage.) By and large, the use of pronouns in Haitian and English is the same but the morphology of the English pronominal system is very difficult for the Haitian and must, again, be intensively drilled.

3.2.1 Possessives

The Haitian Creole rules for what is possessed are more nearly like those of English than they are those of French and should pose no problem. However, possession in Haitian is shown by what is technically termed a *status-construct:* that is, there is no MORPHOLOGICAL sign of possession; it is simply indicated by the juxtaposition of two nouns or a noun and a pronoun with the second noun or pronoun being the possessor of the first:

/frè papa mwɛn/ "my father's brother"
brother father I

Where the Haitian has difficulty, then, is the position of the possessive and the learning of the appropriate morphological forms. As we pointed out above (2.5), the Haitian is almost totally unprepared by his language for any sort of morphological change and he becomes very confused by it.

3.3 Relative clauses

Relative clauses are one English structure which will not give the speaker of Haitian Creole any problem since (a) he has the equivalent of the English *who/whom* distinction (he uses /ki/ for the subject and /kɛ/ for the object) and (b) the relative pronoun can be deleted in Haitian under exactly the same conditions as govern its deletion in English. Even

the distinction between restrictive and non-restrictive relative clauses is simple for the Haitian since the restrictive always requires the definite article but the non-restrictive does not.

3.4 Noun clauses

In Haitian Creole noun clauses cannot be used as the subjects of sentences. A sentence such as

That John drinks whiskey frightens me

must be expressed by the Haitian equivalent of

What frightens me is that John drinks whiskey.

Furthermore, infinitive verbal complements can be used only if the subject of the infinitive is the same as the subject of the main sentence. Thus

I want to go

is exactly paralleled in Haitian but

I want him to go

must be

I want that he go.

3.5 Verbs

Verbs in Haitian are absolutely invariant.

3.5.1. Tense and Aspect

Haitian makes, essentially, seven tense-aspect distinctions. They are indicated by particles which precede the verb. These particles are:

/a/ which indicates distant futurity
/pral/ which indicates near futurity
/ap/ which indicates present continuous or near future
unmarked which indicates either habitual actions; actions the time of which is obvious from context or co-occurring time adverbials; or perfective actions
/fɛk/ which indicates the immediately completed past
/te/ which indicates definite past and emphatic perfective
/ta/ which indicates the conditional mood.

Of all these, the only one which closely parallels an English usage is /ap/, the indicator of an action in progress at the time of speaking. Since the English tense-aspect system divides reality rather differently, every other tense-aspect must be actively and intensively taught. This is especially true of the simple past tense, which, as we pointed out above, also presents phonological problems for the Haitian. Since the Haitian can leave a past tense unmarked if context makes it clear that it is past, we have here two factors which combine to make the correct production of the English form difficult for him.

3.5.2 Agreement.

Haitian has no agreement, either between subject and verb as in the third person singular present tense of English or between noun phrases across the copula as in

My brothers are doctors

which would be expressed in Haitian as

/frè mwɛn yo se dokteu/
brother I the (pl.) be doctor

"My brothers are doctors."

3.5.3 Prepositions

While Haitian possess a full complement of prepositions, these are not used with verbs of motion when the goal of the motion is the to be ex-

pected one. They are also not used across the copula if the location is a place name.

3.5.4 The passive

Haitian has a rule which says that the subject of the sentence must never occur in any position other than immediately before its verb. Since the formation of the passive would require that this rule be violated, Haitian has no passive.

Quasi-passive relationships such as

John broke the window.
The window broke

which pose problems of interpretation for speakers of many languages offer none to the Haitian since this is the normal way the same concepts are expressed in his language.

3.6 The copula

There are four major uses of the copula or linking verb *be* in English:

1) predications of the type *John is a doctor*
2) predications of the type *John is sick*
3) predications of the type *John is in New York*
4) as a verbal auxiliary in the formation of the continuous tenses and the passive voice.

In Haitian, while usage (1) is directly parallel to that of English, usages (2) and (3) are not. In both of these sentence types the copula usually has no overt realization. Thus, sentence (2) in Haitian is simply

/zǎn malad/ John (is) sick
John sick

and sentence (3) is

/zǎn nu yɔk/ John (is in) New York
John New York

(Note that in this sentence no preposition is used either; see 3.5.3 above.)

As we stated above, the present continuous in Haitian is formed with /ap/ which here functions as a sort of copula, and, as there is no passive there is absolutely no parallel for the use of *be* in this structure.

The English copula *be* represents a myriad of problems for the Haitian: It has more overt agreement than any other verb in English and, especially in its contracted form, in the third person singular *('s)* and in the plural *('re)*, presents the speaker of Haitian Creole with a difficult phonological hurdle.

A great deal of time should be devoted to establishing the USE of an overt copula with adjectives and in predications of location and in establishing control of subject-verb agreement, particularly where English uses contracted forms.

3.7 Questions

In Haitian, as we stated in 3.5.4, the subject-verb order is inviolable; there are *no* rules which require subjects to come after their verbs. Yes/no questions are formed either simply by a rising intonation or by prefixing to the sentence /ɛskɛ/ 'is it the case that . . .' The English rule of subject-verb inversion for questions with *be* or with an auxiliary verb is particularly difficult since it violates a basic rule of Haitian Creole grammar. Question word questions are formed by having the question word at the beginning of the sentence. However, nothing corresponding to *do* is used—the Haitian question is of the form

What you want?

Intensive drill on the use of *do* and on its agreement with its following subject is necessary.

3.8 Negatives

In general, Haitian negatives are formed by putting /pa/ 'not' before the verb or before the tense/aspect particle. Again, nothing corresponding to English *do* occurs. Haitian has no negative articles, but it does have two negative indefinite pronouns: /pɛson/ 'no one' and /anyɛn/ 'nothing' which, if they are used, require /pa/ before the verb

/mwɛn pa we pɛson/ "I didn't see anyone"
I not see no one

/ǰan pa manǰe anyɛn/ "John didn't eat anything"
John not eat nothing

An additional learning problem is posed by the fact that the English negative in its reduced form *-n't* presents an impossible final cluster for the speaker of Haitian Creole which is compounded even worse when it has to co-occur with *does, is* or *was*, since /-znt/ (with a lightly syllabic /n/) is an utterly impossible final cluster. It is best, in the beginning, not to insist on /-znt/ but rather to teach the contraction as being /-zən(t)/ since this is, after all, the English alternant which is found in rapid speech.

4.0 Lexicon

As is normal in any Romance-based language, the everyday Haitian word is frequently the same as the learned word in English. This often means that the more elevated and Latinate the teacher is in his speech style the more apt his student is to understand him. Thus, *He is nearsighted* in Creole is /li miopik/, literally "he (is) myopic" and *The child is changeable (in mood)* is /pɛtit la šimɛrik/, literally "the child (is) chimeric."

A caveat which should be entered, of course, is that, again like standard French and Spanish, Haitian has some words which are only partly the same in meaning, as /mone/ 'coins (not money in general)' and deceptive cognates as /aktwel/ 'present (adv.)', /aktwelman/ 'at present,' not, as in English, *actual* = 'real'; these, again, must be looked out for and actively taught.

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